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Target, Lowe's Team Up with San José and Santa Clara County to Hire 150 Teens from Challenged Neighborhoods this Summer

SAN JOSE—Today, Mayor Sam Liccardo, Supervisor Cindy Chavez, and Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco joined with Target and Lowe's to announce the retailers' commitments to hire local youth who face barriers to employment this summer. The retailers are the first corporations to sign up with the work2future Summer Youth Employment Initiative.

"I want to thank Target and Loews for believing in San José youth," Mayor Sam Liccardo said. "We want our teens to build resumes, not rap sheets. We know that the best deterrent to involvement in crime and gangs is a job and a paycheck."

"We need to help get these kids off the streets and into a career path," said Supervisor Cindy Chavez. "We know from first-hand experience that increasing job opportunities decreases the incidence of high-risk behaviors."

Lowe's has committed to hiring 100 youth at Santa Clara County locations this summer. Target will be hiring at least 50 young people in the county. Both companies have committed to placing youth who would traditionally have a hard time finding employment. The majority of the youth will live in neighborhoods identified as hot-spots for crime and gang activity.

Despite a growing regional economy, San José's youth unemployment rate continues to hover above 20 percent. This summer jobs effort is a first step in taking aim at this problem. Mayor Liccardo has launched SJ Works initiative to develop longer-term solutions to address the intertwined challenges of economic disparity and public safety.

The Mayor also will be proposing \$1 million in additional funds in his March budget message (to be released March 16). These funds will match Santa Clara County's \$1 million in funding for jobs this summer for at least 500 at-risk youth, ages 16-21, with a priority on foster youth.

"For many San José youth, these summer jobs offer a bright beginning and a fresh start," said Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco. "I hope more employers will join Target and Lowe's and step up to help youth gain the experience they need for a strong future."

The announcement was made at the Target store at King and Story roads in East San José, a neighborhood that has undergone transformation since the City's former redevelopment agency invested in and helped locate the store and other retail there.

"We look forward to helping more San José young people get started with their careers," said Benny Boveda, District Manager for the South Bay for Target Corporation. "Whether they continue in retail or in other paths, we are proud to partner with the City and County to help youth connect with the work world."

Through the work2future Summer Youth Employment Initiative, youth will have access to occupational skills training, career advising, leadership development and community service activities, supportive services, access to computer labs, job fairs, internships leading to employment, and/or connections to post-secondary education. The initiative is a partnership between the City of San José and Santa Clara County and private partners like Target and Lowe's.

About work2future:

Established in 2000 under the Workforce Investment Act, work2future serves thousands of adult and at-risk youth clients annually throughout Santa Clara County. The mission of work2future is to provide the skills and connect job seekers with employers from growth sectors. Recently designated as a "High Performing Workforce Investment Board" by the State of California, work2future is located within the City of San José's Office of Economic Development. work2future leverages business relationships within Silicon Valley to connect companies with qualified job seekers. Through partner networks, clients access a wide array of services to advance their career objectives. work2future has worked with its partners to develop programs for at-risk youth, the homeless, veterans, and long-term unemployed individuals.

To learn more about work2future services, including summer jobs for teens, please call 408.794.1234 or visit www.work2futurefoundation.org.

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